

Proposed Amendments to the 2026/27 Budget and Council Tax	
Proposing Amendments	Conservative Group
Proposer and Seconder of Amendments	Proposer: Cllr Simche Steinberger Seconder: Cllr Hershy Lisser
For consideration by	Full Council
Meeting Date:	4 March 2026

This Council therefore amends as set out below the 2026/27 budget proposals, by proposing a reduction in the proposed Hackney element of the Council Tax of **£93.79** per Band D equivalent. This reduction offsets the proposed Hackney and GLA council tax increases and means that we are proposing holding the total council tax rate at 2025/26 levels which will help working families during this cost of living crisis.

	£'000s
Reduce the Mayor allowance and reduce the number of cabinet member posts by one Deputy Mayor and three Deputy Cabinet members.	(137)
Reviewing and reducing the highways maintenance revenue budget <i>The S151 officer notes that there is a risk that this investment may need to be replaced in the following year. The highways maintenance revenue budget is £635K - reducing spend in this area increases the risk of insurance claims so may cost the Council more in the long run. In addition the increase in the cost of materials in highways maintenance has reduced the buying power of the budget - further reductions will impact the quality of the highway and may lead to increased cost through insurance claims.</i>	(317)
Stop the Zero Emissions Network.	(137)
Reduce revenue expenditure budget on tree maintenance and overall investment in this area and ensure that the remaining budget in this area is spent effectively and delivers value for money. <i>The S151 officer notes that there is a risk that this investment may need to be replaced in the following year. The revenue budget for tree maintenance, on the streets and in parks, is £565K. There is also an insurance risk if trees are not maintained - there will be a heightened risk of health and safety issues with falling trees or branches which could cause injury or damage to property. May cost the Council more in the long run</i>	(282)
Cease spending in developing enhanced and expanded Supplementary Planning Guidance on green infrastructure, including vertical forests,	(68)

	£'000s
green thoroughfares and gardens.	
Cease spending on additional officers in the Private Sector Housing division in relation to enforcement around damp and mould and ensure current service is as efficient and effective as possible. <i>The S151 officer notes that there is income for the new Private Sector Housing Licensing scheme approved by Cabinet in October this year and scheduled to begin in the new financial year will fund these officers and so may not deliver this saving.</i>	(400)
Reduce the Council's expenditure on External & Internal Communications by 25%.	(441)
Reduce strategy and policy team by 20%	(555)
Reduce Chief Executive Office by 20%	(277)
Review of management structures with the aim of reducing Directors - each one Circa £185K - reduce by one post.	(185)
Cease producing Love Hackney publication <i>The S151 officer notes that this proposal may increase expenditure across the Council as services who have a statutory duty to consult and use the Love Hackney distribution contract will need to incur costs each time they need to inform or consult.</i>	(106)
Reduction in support in Mayor & Cabinet office by 25%	(158)
Reduce Waste Strategy, Environmental Enforcement & Recycling staffing	(679)
Reduce Building Maintenance budgets on corporate buildings by 10% <i>The S151 office notes that this proposal may need to be replaced in the following year, In addition, if work is health and safety related it will have to be carried out and there may then be an adverse impact on the Council's reserve.</i>	(640)
Root & branch review of all council expenditure with a view to reducing spend on a range of services including, Customer Services, Enforcement and all support functions such as ICT, Finance, Property & Legal Services.	(3,137)
TOTAL CHANGE IN BUDGET REQUIREMENT	(7,519)

The Conservative group therefore amends, as set out the 2026/27 budget proposals, including a reduction in the proposed Council Tax for Hackney of **£93.79** per Band D equivalent when compared to the Council Tax recommended in the Budget Report.

The proposed amendments set out above will generate a Council Tax Requirement of £116.718m in 2026/27, which equates to a Hackney Council Tax of £1,456.00 at the Band D level which is a £20.13 reduction from the 2025-26. When added to the proposals of the preceptor, the Greater London Authority, this will produce a total at

band D level of £1,966.51 for residents in 2026/27, which is the same total council tax as in 2025/26. This is shown in the table below:

Comparison of the 2025/26 Actual Council Tax level to the 2026/27 Council Tax Proposed by this Conservative Amendment to the Hackney Element.

	2025/26	2026/27	Increase/ Reduction £	Increase/ Reduction %
LBH	1,476.13	1,456.00	-20.13	-1.36
GLA	490.38	510.51	20.13	4.10
Combined	1,966.51	1,966.51	0.00	0.00

It should be noted that the Conservative Group do not agree with any increase in the GLA precept and indeed we believe that if we had a Conservative Mayor of London, there would be no increase in the GLA precept.

The GLA should end inefficient and wasteful expenditure on schemes and projects that ignore the outcome of consultations. In addition, all schools should benefit from the Mayor of London's free school meals announcement, not just state schools.

A Conservative administration would undertake a root and branch review of the budget and would introduce an emergency budget to realign the Council's expenditure in line with a Conservative Mayor's priorities.

Overarching Priorities

Our first priority would be to immediately stop the spend on the Hackney Central Project which includes the Amhurst Road and Pembury Circus projects, which is part of yet another scheme which has cost a total £11.4m to date and is forecast to spend a further £7.7m. The project includes road closures and seeks to hinder car users from travelling around the borough. We will seek to cease the traffic elements of this project because it is not beneficial for anybody and it will cause more pollution. The project, coupled with the pedestrianisation of the Narroway shifts traffic from a retail centre onto a predominantly residential street increasing air pollution and adversely impacting the residents. This project has had an adverse impact on the safety of local residents and other road users as well as being detrimental to local businesses in the area. We will seek to remove the road closure elements of the project and seek to retain the grant funding and invest in services for the local community.

We will seek to cease the implementation of any new schemes relating to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, Bus gates, road closures and other such measures which are ineffective, thereby reducing air pollution particularly around schools. Each new scheme costs £242,000 to implement and such schemes have had an adverse impact on the safety of local residents and other road users. We also believe that some of these schemes have had an adverse impact on local businesses and residents. We will also seek to remove all Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, bus gates and other such schemes which prevent residents and business owners from travelling around the borough.

Our next priority would be to review the way in which officers support members, the current system is not working with slow responses and in some cases no response at all. The review would look at all aspects of member support arrangements ensuring

efficiency and reduced cost of the support provided via direct contact with relevant officers across the Council as required.

We would make a commitment to explore the potential of a shared Planning service with another neighbouring authority such as the London borough of Haringey. The aim of a shared service would be to improve the efficiency of the service and also create a better understanding of the approach to large families. This commitment is being made to speed up the delivery of planning applications, improve the quality of the planning service and to ensure we can utilise all of the space in houses to respond to the housing needs of the borough.

In addition to the proposed amendments set out above for 2026/27, the Conservative group proposes that the following takes place during 2026/27 in order to identify further efficiencies and improvements to service to ensure value for money for Council tax payers:

- A review of the roads maintenance programme ensuring that repairs are not required to be repeated on the same roads and pathways within short timeframes and ensuring that works by the Council are fully coordinated with those of the utility companies.
- Recognising that the funding available to Hackney from TfL as part of the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) has reduced, we would still review the programme with a view to agreeing a re-prioritisation of funding in order to reduce calls on the Council's discretionary capital programme for general highways maintenance. This review and any subsequent proposed changes to the approved LIP will need to be agreed by TfL. Further to this, we would encourage TfL to supply seating at all bus stops, available for those residents and users that have disabilities or unable to stand for prolonged periods of time; and to ensure that no further cuts are made to the buses that run through Hackney, either in terms of their numbers or routes. Additionally, a Conservative administration would lobby the GLA for the focus of the LIP programme to shift to general maintenance of the highway rather than schemes that restrict traffic flow.
- Reopen roads round Clapton Common prioritising the safety of residents in recognition of accidents that have occurred and stop further investment on initiatives here investing any monies saved into services for older people
- Review of street crossing patrols with a view to increasing the number across the borough to ensure the safety of children using our roads.
- Revoking the policy change in respect of moving to two weekly bin collection and to reinstate weekly service across all of the borough. We believe that the two weekly bin collections reward those on estates where recycling rates are lowest whilst penalising those in other types of accommodation who already recycle waste. We would also reduce unnecessary expenditure on replacement bins.
- A commitment to ensure that there are no reductions in the support of children in our schools with special education needs.
- A thorough research project to determine the feasibility of raising revenue income from advertisements on the Council's recycling and refuse vehicle fleet.
- Further to this we would undertake a thorough analysis of income from CPZ's and how this is used in support of the Council's budget, ensuring it is used fully in accordance with the related statutory regulations. Ensure schemes are adapted

for all communities and that there is a special dispensation for Churches, Synagogues and Mosques and Public Holidays.

- A review of the consultation process, particularly regarding CPZs, to ensure that every local resident and local business have a say, unlike the new consultation process which limits responses per household. In addition, the final decisions should take full account of the views expressed by residents and businesses.
- Explore the possibility of removing estate parking charges to encourage residents of the estates to park on those estates with a view to freeing up parking capacity on surrounding roads in the borough for other users.
- A review of the application of s106 funds to ensure that those with some flexibility regarding their use are used most efficiently in pursuit of the Council's overall aims and objectives. In addition, a review of the application of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to ensure a fairer distribution across schools in the borough.
- Review of the application of funds available to the Council for the implementation of Neighbourhood Forums, e.g. in the Stamford Hill area, alongside a review of the Planning Service to ensure that consideration of applications for local neighbourhood forums is fair. It is currently very difficult to get local neighbourhood forums agreed by the London Borough of Hackney.
- Explore more fully the potential of providing some of our services to other Council's, thus maximising efficiencies further and generating income for the Council.
- A review of assistance to small business to ensure that optimum level of support is provided, focusing on areas such as increasing take up of small business rate relief. In addition, undertake a review and improve communication to ensure local businesses are aware of any grants including those who do not have on-line access to ensure maximum uptake.
- Ensure that social care is delivered in a way that ensures the needs of all communities are respected and accommodated and ensure that all new funding streams are fully explored and utilised.
- Review existing Children's Centre provision and identify options to maintain provision at all existing sites.
- A review of the use of the corporate estate, ensuring that public areas are used to their full capacity and thus increasing revenue to the Council. This review will include specifically:
 - Review of the use of estate community halls with a view to increasing the use by residents of the borough;
 - Encourage schools to use suitable space for out-of-hours activities for residents in order to raise additional revenue income for further investment in the schools.
- End ward forums with immediate effect and use the monies thereby saved for social care.
- Implement independent scrutiny before planning enforcement actions are taken to ensure that cases with low risk of success and where there is not a robust public interest argument, are not taken forward.

- Discontinue the Standards Committee with immediate effect given this is no longer a legal requirement, whilst ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Localism Act and other statutory guidance. In any event, whilst the Committee exists, ensure that it does comply with those regulations.
- Further review of the Scrutiny arrangements with a view to revert to the previous system which was in place.
- Bearing in mind the increase to the GLA element of the Council Tax, to make representations to the Mayor of London regarding future scrutiny of expenditure on schemes within the Borough of Hackney, e.g. All schools should benefit from the Free School Meals announcement, the number of police officers on the streets and the number of buses he is proposing to reduce.
- Review of legal expenditure in relation to defending new policy decisions.
- Undertake an efficiency review of the process for allocating Blue Badges and allocation of disabled bays.
- Review the processes and make full use of empty garages
- Undertake a thorough review of the processes for Housing Benefits and Council Tax to ensure efficiency and effectiveness and ensure that households moving onto the Universal credit will not be affected by the loss of Council Tax Benefits.

Overall, this budget is put forward within a limited context and were a Conservative administration to be elected we would undertake a zero-base budget review of all areas of spend.

Advice from the Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources (Section 151 Officer)

The Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources advises that whilst he can give the reassurances required by Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 with regard to the adequacy of the reserves and the robustness of the estimates on the basis of the notes included with the proposed amendments, the proposal not to increase Council tax will weaken the financial resilience of the Council going forward. The increase foregone this year cannot be recovered unless the Council were to enter into a requirement for Emergency Finance Support (EFS) with the Government. Under these circumstances, the Council would be permitted to increase Council Tax above the maximum permitted under the Local Government Finance Settlement to contribute to balancing a future years budget. This has been a measure extended to struggling councils to balance their budgets.